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Agenda item 10

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Joint written statement submitted by Franciscans International, World Confederation of Labour, World Federation of Democratic Youth, World Federation of Trade Unions and World Muslim Congress, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status: African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters, American Association of Jurists, Arab Lawyers Union, Arab Organization for Human Rights, Asian Women's Human Rights Council, Canadian Council of Churches, Centre for European Studies, Change, Commission for the Defence of Human Rights in Central America, General Arab Women Foundation, Human Rights Internet, Felix Varela Centre, International Association against Torture, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, International Federation of Journalists, International Human Rights Law Group, International Indian Treaty Council, International League for Human Rights, International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development, International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs, Latin American Federation of Associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, Movimiento Cubano para la Paz y la Soberanía de los Pueblos, New Humanity, North South XXI, Parliamentarians for Global Action, Pax Romana, Society for Threatened Peoples, United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation, World Movement of Mothers, World Society of Victimology and Worldview International Foundation, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status: Association for World Education, International Educational Development, Inc., International Federation of Free Journalists, International Human Rights Association of American Minorities, International Peace Bureau, International Right to Life Federation, Liberation, Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples, Saami Council, World Alliance of Reformed Churches and World Organization against Torture, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[15 April 1998]

1. The participating organizations in consultative status, along with the Zairian Association for the Defence of Human Rights, are gravely concerned at the continued war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and by the increasingly genocidal dimension of that war, as evidence by: (a) targeting of the civilian population by the Sri Lankan forces; (b) the epidemic proportions of disappearances, torture, extrajudicial killings, rape, arbitrary arrest and indefinite detention of Tamil civilians; (c) a sweeping embargo in the north and east of subsistence food and essential medicine in contravention of humanitarian law; (d) the existence of more than 850,000 displaced persons living in appalling conditions at risk now of starvation and death.

2. In his message to the Tamil people on National Heroes Day in November 1997, Mr Velupillai Pirabakaran, leader of the LTTE, stated that any political solution should take into account the following four points of the Thimbu Conference of 1985 on which all Tamil political parties agreed:

(a) The Tamil people are a national entity and have a distinct language, culture and customs;

(b) The Tamil people have historically inhabited a contiguous territory in the north-east of Sri Lanka which is their homeland;

(c) The Tamil people have the right to decide their political destiny based on the right to self-determination of peoples;

(d) All Tamils, including the Plantation Tamils, should enjoy full rights in the island.

3. To contribute to resolution of the situation in Sri Lanka and to provide meaningful international support to secure the aspirations of the Tamil people, we urge the Commission to adopt a resolution in which it:

(a) Calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to withdraw all its armed forces from the Tamil homeland;

(b) Calls on both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to secure a political solution that allows the Tamil people to realize its right to self-determination and that establishes full human rights for all the people of Sri Lanka; and

(c) Appoints a Special Rapporteur with a mandate to investigate the situation and monitor a peace process.